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cus, of the royalists—Marchamont Needham, then Mercurius Politicus, in defense of the Commonwealth? It was an incident of this employment that he “ordered in” a morally “double-leaded leader” on Cromwell’s “crowning mercy,” if perchance his own hand did not itself thus sprinkle “Worcester’s laureate wreath.” Let this fact pique our readers’ curiosity enough to send them to Prof. Masson’s volumes. Albeit let no man venture the treasonable imagination that any restorations or disclosures of the truth of history have erased, or can erode, the epitaph of John Milton as, of all liberties—religious, intellectual, and political—the foremost advocate and ever-faithful defender. His ardent and magnanimous nature throbbed with such divine amplitude and energy, that it could involve in its own vibrations the agitated soul of a nation, and transmit, redoubled, to distant thrones and peoples, the deep tones of her deliberate valor, or the terrible tocsins of her wrath. But the overtones, never silent in that magnetic resonance, were those which sang the august and sacred aspirations of civilized man for the pure atmosphere of perfect freedom.

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2.—*A History of England in the Eighteenth Century.* By WILLIAM EDWARD HARTPOLE LECKY. Vols. I. and II.

THERE are several ways of writing history. The earliest method, or that exemplified in the classics of Greece and Rome (Herodotus, perhaps, excepted), gave us scarcely any notion of the condition of the people, either morally or economically, the state of religion and philosophy, and the progress of art, science, and literature; but concerned itself solely with political and military matters, with great rulers and great generals, with the rise and fall of governments and dynasties, with invasions and conquests, with the march of armies and stirring descriptions of battles, with the triumphs of victorious hosts, and the difficulties, dangers, and horrors of retreats. It admitted, nay courted, the composition of speeches which were real only in so far as they corresponded with the character, or supposed character, of the personages whom the historian was describing; and the writer’s talent was displayed in nothing more than in depicting such scenes as the plague at Athens, and Hannibal’s crossing the Alps, or in furnishing heroes with harangues that rival the orations of Demosthenes.

In more modern history, we have discarded these specimens of eloquence as approaching too near to fiction; but for a long period the moderns took no more interest than the ancients in the state of

the whole people, and made no effort to learn their condition, thinking everything beneath the dignity of their art except things belonging to princes and potentates—the campaigns of illustrious soldiers, the negotiation of treaties, and the union or separation of nations.

After a time, however, it began to be seen that this course did not give the real history of a people, and afforded no sufficient means for the composition of a truly philosophical narrative, through which a clear train of causation might be perceived to run. This new idea was first elaborated by the late Lord Macaulay in his celebrated essay, and the “History of England,” in which he reduced his theory to practice. The earliest author, however, who viewed historical composition in this its true light was Sir Walter Scott. Although not a professed historian till after he had become the foremost of romance-writers, he evinced in his works of fiction a genius for reanimating the past, and set an example to future annalists of making history at once more picturesque and more true to real life than the productions of their predecessors. This praise is accorded to Scott by Thierry in his account of the Norman conquest, and by Macaulay himself when he tells us that Clarendon left us only half a picture of his times, and that, if the historian of the Great Rebellion had adopted the right method, we should not have had to look for the votes and wars of the Puritans in his work, and for their phraseology in “Old Mortality.” It has often been remarked that Raphael’s great painting of “The Transfiguration” is really two pictures: one celestial, on the mountain-top, the other terrestrial, at its base; but, before Macaulay’s time, historians did not trouble themselves with the lower half of things. The upper half they delineated, leaving novelists and biographers to supply the lower. Hence it is that we find “one half of King James in Hume, and the other half in ‘The Fortunes of Nigel.’”

Attempts have also been made to evolve the history of a people from their literature and philosophy, as in the late Lord Lytton’s “Rise and Fall of Athens”—an ingenious and elaborate work, which deserved a better fate than never to have been finished.

But Mr. Lecky, in the history before us, has pursued a method of his own. It is, in fact, a civil and political philosophy of the eighteenth century. In a period filled with wars and fighting, he does not enliven his pages with a single battle-piece, nor even a description of a campaign. Marlborough’s great victories, which proved him as truly England’s most illustrious captain as Nelson was her most illustrious admiral, are mentioned simply by name.

The two Jacobite rebellions in Scotland, of which Scott has made so much in "Waverley" and the "Legend of Montrose," are passed over with very brief notices; and even the famous battle of Fontenoy, which led to the second, occupies but half a page. One would have expected some military pageantry during the reign of Frederick the Great, but that portion of the book is as peaceful as the rest. It is evident, in short, that Mr. Lecky feels no need of such attractions to float his history.

If, however, one is more enamored of thought than of sensation, of ingenious disquisition than of brilliant narrative, Mr. Lecky's volumes will prove most attractive; while the vast variety of topics discussed, extending from changes of national policy and the vicissitudes of national parties to the rise of sea-bathing, or from the sad and cruel history of the Irish penal laws to the history of drunkenness, will keep his attention continually occupied. So fully fraught with matter are Mr. Lecky's pages that a previous acquaintance with the facts, not only of English but of European history, is necessary to follow and understand him. But, with this amount of preparation, the reader has an immense treasure before him: the Whig and Tory parties, the aristocracy, the Church, the Dissenters, the decay of the doctrine of the divine right of kings, commerce, corruption and reform, art and science, religious laws, the growth of the military system, national tastes and manners, music and the drama, medicine and sanitary improvement, the English colonies, Scotland, Ireland, Hindostan, America. All these topics, and many more, are discussed with remarkable penetration and varied knowledge, and, though we have arrived at the end of two volumes, not a word has yet been said on our War of Independence nor the events that led to it. George Washington is just introduced as a young officer in the British service.

We have already said enough to convey our opinion that the style of this work has no pretensions to rival the brilliant rhetoric of Macaulay or Motley, or even of Froude. The subjects did not admit of such treatment, and the frequent retroversions in chronology necessitated by a theme so varied precluded the possibility of continuous evolution in the narrative. Many of the topics may be studied separately, such, for example, as Methodism; but we cannot see how the plan of the work could have been other than it is. We shall wait with impatience for the concluding volumes, because we desire to see our own Revolutionary War handled by an author of such power and impartiality.